PR1119
.A2
No.12

D. N. Lowrie.
Elmwood.

The Wright's Chaste Wife.

BOSTON COLLEGE LIBRARY
CHESTNUT HILL, MASS.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2015

https://archive.org/details/wrightschastewif00adam

The Wyght's Chaste Wife,

OR

"A Fable of a wryght that was maryde to a pore
wydows dowtre / the whiche wydow havyng noo
good to geve with her / gave as for a
precyous Johelle to hym a Rose
garlond / the whyche she affermyd
wold never fade while she
kept truly her wedlok."

A Merry Tale, by Adam of Cobsam,

From a MS. in the Library of the Archbishop of Canterbury, at Lambeth, about 1462 *A.D.*

COPIED AND EDITED BY

FREDERICK J. FURNIVALL.

LONDON:
PUBLISHED FOR THE EARLY ENGLISH TEXT SOCIETY,
BY N. TRÜBNER & CO., 60, PATERNOSTER ROW.

MDCCCLXV.

PR1119
A2
no. 13

224342

JOHN CHILDS AND SON, PRINTERS.

PREFACE.

Good wine needs no bush, and this tale needs no Preface. I shall not tell the story of it—let readers go to the verse itself for that; nor shall I repeat to those who begin it the exhortation of the englisher of *Sir Generides*,

> "for goddes sake, or ye hens wende,
> Here this tale unto the ende."—(ll. 3769-70.)

If any one having taken it up is absurd enough to lay it down without finishing it, let him lose the fun, and let all true men pity him. Though the state of morals disclosed by the story is not altogether satisfactory, yet it is a decided mprovement on that existing in Roberd of Brunne's time in 1303, for he had to complain of the lords of his day:

> Also do þese lordynges,
> þe[y] trespas moche yn twey þynges;
> þey rauys a mayden aȝens here wyl,
> And mennys wyuys þey lede awey þertyl.
> A grete vylanye þarte he dous
> ȝyf he make therof hys rouse [boste]:
> þe dede ys confusyun,
> And more ys þe dyffamacyun.

The volume containing the poem was shown to me by Mr Stubbs, the Librarian at Lambeth, in order that I might see the version of Sir Gyngelayne, son of Sir Gawain, which Mr Morris is some day, I trust, to edit for the Society in one of his Gawain volumes. Finding the present poem also on the paper leaves, I copied it out the same afternoon, and here it is for a half-hour's amusement to any reader who chooses to take it up.

The handwriting of the MS. must be of a date soon after 1460, and this agrees well with the allusion to Edward the Fourth's accession, and the triumph of the White Rose o'er the Red alluded to in the last lines of the poem. The Garlond,

> It was made . . .
> Of flourys most of honoure,
> Of roses whyte þat wylle nott fade,
> Whych floure alle ynglond doth glade. . .
> Vn-to the whych floure I-wys
> The loue of God and of the comonys
> Subdued bene of ryght.

For, that the Commons of England were glad of their Yorkist king, and loved Duke Richard's son, let Holinshed's record prove. He testifies:

"Wherevpon it was againe demanded of the commons, if they would admit and take the said erle as their prince and souereigne lord; which all with one voice cried: Yea, yea. . .

"Out of the ded stocke sprang a branch more mightie than the stem; this Edward the Fourth, a prince so highlie fauoured of the peple, for his great liberalitie, clemencie, vpright dealing, and courage, that aboue all other, he with them stood in grace alone: by reason whereof, men of all ages and degrees to him dailie repaired, some offering themselues and their men to ieopard their liues with him, and other plentiouslie gaue monie to support his charges, and to mainteine his right."

Would that we knew as much of Adam of Cobsam as of our White-Rose king. He must have been one of the Chaucer breed, but more than this poem tells of him I cannot learn.

3, *St George's Square, N.W.*,
23 *November*, 1865.

P.S.—There are other Poems about Edward IV. in the volume, which will be printed separately. One on Women is given at the end of the present text.

THE WRIGHT'S CHASTE WIFE.

[*MS. Lambeth* 306, *fol.* 178-187.]

Allemyghty god, maker of alle,
Saue you my souereyns in towre & halle,
And send you good grace!
If ye wylle a stounde blynne,
Of a story I wylle begynne,
And telle you alle the cas,
Meny farleyes þat I haue herde,
Ye would haue wondyr how yt ferde;
Lystyn, and ye schalle here;
Of a wryght I wylle you telle
That some tyme in thys land gan dwelle,
And lyued by hys myster.
Whether that he were yn or oute,
Of erthely man hadde he no dowte,
To werke hows, harowe, nor plowgh,
Or other werkes, what so they were,
Thous wrought he hem farre and nere,
And dyd tham wele I-nough.
Thys wryght would wedde no wyfe,
Butt yn yougeth to lede hys lyfe
In myrthe and oþre melody;
Ouer alle where he gan wende,
Alle they seyd "welcome, frende,
Sytt downe, and do gla[d]ly."

My sovereigns,

I will tell you a tale

of a wright

of this land,

who, at work, was afraid of no earthly man.

At first he would wed no wife,

[Fol. 178. b.]

for wherever he went he was welcome;

but at last he wished

Tylle on a tyme he was wyllyng,
As tyme comyth of alle thyng,
(So seyth the profesye,)
to have a spouse to look after his goods.
A wyfe for to wedde & haue
That myght hys goodes kepe & saue,
And for to leue alle foly.
A widow near had a fair daughter
Ther dwellyd a wydowe in þat contre
That hadde a doughter feyre & fre ;
Of her, word sprang wyde,
true and meek.
For sche was bothe stabylle & trewe,
Meke of maners, and feyre of hewe ;
So seyd men in that tyde.
Her the wright would like to lie by him,
The wryght seyde, "so god me saue,
Such a wyfe would I haue
To lye nyghtly by my syde."
and therefore went to her mother
He þought to speke wyth þat may,
And rose erly on a daye
And þyder gan he to ryde.
and proposed for the maiden.
The wryght was welcome to þe wyfe,
And her saluyd alle so blyve,
And so he dyd her doughter fre :
For the erand that he for came
Tho he spake, þat good yemane ;
Than to hym seyd sche :
The mother says she can only give him as a portion
The wydow seyd, "by heuen kyng,
I may geue wyth her no þing,
(And þat forthynketh me ;)
a garland
Saue a garlond I wylle the geue,
Ye schalle neuer see, whyle ye lyve,
None such in thys contre :
of roses
Haue here thys garlond of roses ryche,
In alle thys lond ys none yt lyche,
that will keep its colour
For ytt wylle euer be newe,
[Fol. 179.]
Wete þou wele withowtyn fable,
while his wife is true,
Alle the whyle thy wyfe ys stable
The chaplett wolle hold hewe ;

And yf thy wyfe vse putry,
Or tolle eny man to lye her by,
Than wolle yt change hewe,
And by the garlond þou may see,
Fekylle or fals yf þat sche be,
Or ellys yf sche be trewe."
Of thys chaplett hym was fulle fayne,
And of hys wyfe, was nott to layne ;
He weddyd her fulle sone,
And ladde her home wyth solempnite,
And hyld her brydalle dayes thre.
Whan they home come,
Thys wryght in hys hart cast,
If that he walkyd est or west
As he was wonte to done,
"My wyfe þat ys so bryght of ble
Men wolle desyre here fro me,
And þat hastly and sone ;"
Butt sone he hym byþought
That a chambyr schuld be wrought
Bothe of lyme and stone,
Wyth wallys strong as eny stele,
And dorres sotylly made and wele,
He owte framyd yt sone ;
The chambyr he lett make fast,
Wyth plaster of parys þat wylle last,
Such ous know I neuer none ;
Ther ys kyng ne emperoure,
And he were lockyn in þat towre,
That cowde gete owte of þat wonne.
Nowe hath he done as he þought,
And in the myddes of the flore wrought
A wondyr strange gyle,
A trapdoure rounde abowte
That no man myght come yn nor owte ;
It was made wyth a wyle,

but change when she is faithless.

The wright is delighted with his garland and wife,

marries her and takes her home;

and then begins to think that when he is out at work

men will try to corrupt his wife.

So he plans a crafty room and tower

and builds it soon with plaster of Paris,

which no one could ever get out of if he once got into it,

for there was a trapdoor in the middle,

[Fol. 179. b.]

and if any one only touched it, down he'd go into a pit.

That who-so touchyd yt eny thyng,
In to þe pytt he schuld flyng
Wythyn a lytylle whyle.

This was to stop any tricks with his wife.

For hys wyfe he made that place,
That no man schuld beseke her of grace,
Nor her to begyle.

Just then the town Lord

By þat tyme þe lord of the towne
Hadde ordeynyd tymbyr redy bowne,

sends for him to build a Hall,

An halle to make of tre.
Aft*er* the wryght the lord lett sende
For þat he schuld wyth hym lende

(a job for two or three months,)

Monythys two or thre.
The lord seyd, "woult þou haue þi wyfe?

and offers to fetch his wife too.

I wylle send aft*er* her blyve
That sche may com to the."
The wryght hys garlond hadde take w*yth* hym,
That was bryght and no þing dymme,
Yt wes feyre on to see.

He sees the wright's garland and asks what it means.

The lord axyd hym as he satt,
"Felowe, where hadyst þou þis hatte
That ys so feyre and newe?"
The wryght answerd alle so blyue,

"Sir, it will

And seyd, "syr, I hadde yt wyth my wyfe,
And þat dare me neuer*e* rewe;

tell me whether my wife is false or true;

Syr, by my garlond I may see
Fekylle or fals yf þat sche be,
Or[1] yf þat sche be trewe;

[1 MS. *of*]

and will change its colour if she go wrong."

And yf my wyfe loue a p*a*ramoure,
Than wylle my garlond vade coloure,
And change wylle yt the hewe."

"I'll try that," thinks the Lord,

The lord þought "by godys myght,
That wylle I wete thys same nyght
Whether thys tale be trewe."

and goes to the wright's wife.

To the wryghtys howse anon he went,
He fonde the wyfe ther-in p*re*sente

That was so bryght and schene ; [Fol. 180.]
Sone he hayled her trewly,
And so dyd sche the lord curtesly :
Sche seyd, "welcome ye be ;"
Thus seyd the wyfe of the hows,
"Syr, howe faryth my swete spowse
That hewyth vppon youre tre ?"
"Sertes, dame," he seyd, "wele,
And I am come, so haue I hele,
To wete the wylle of the ;
My loue ys so vppon the cast
That me thynketh my hert wolle brest,
It wolle none otherwyse be ;
Good dame, graunt me thy grace
To pley with the in some preuy place
For gold and eke for fee."
"Good syr, lett be youre fare,
And of such wordes speke no mare
For hys loue þat dyed on tre ;
Hadde we onys begonne þat gle,
My husbond by his garlond myght see ;
For sorowe he would wexe woode."
"Certes, dame," he seyd, "naye ;
Loue me, I pray you, in þat ye maye :
For godys loue change thy mode,
Forty marke schalle be youre mede
Of sylu*er* and of gold [so] rede,
And that schalle do the good."
"Syr, that deede schalle be done ;
Take me that mony here anone."
"I swere by the holy rode
I thought when I cam hyddere
For to bryng yt alle to-gyddere,
As I mott breke my heele."
Ther sche toke xl marke
Of syluer and gold styff and sterke :

She asks after her husband,
but the Lord
declares his own love for her,
and prays her to grant him his will.
She entreats him to let that be,
but he presses her,
and offers her 40 marks.
On this she consents if he'll put down the money.
The 40 marks she takes,

and tells him to go

Sche toke yt feyre and welle ;
Sche seyd, "in to the chambyr wylle we,
Ther no man schalle vs see ;
No lenger wylle we spare."

[Fol. 180. b.]
into the secret chamber.

Upstairs he goes,

Vp the steyer they gan[1] hye :
The stepes were made so queyntly
That farther myght he nott fare.

stumbles,

The lord stumbyllyd as he went in hast,
He felle doune in to þat chaste

and pops down 40 feet through the wright's trapdoor.

Forty fote and somedele more.
The lord began to crye ;
The wyfe seyd to hym in hye,
"Syr, what do ye there?"

He prays the

"Dame, I can nott seye howe
That I am come hydder nowe
To thys hows þat ys so newe ;
I am so depe in thys sure flore
That I ne can come owte att no dore ;

good dame to' have pity on him.

Good dame, on me þou rewe!"

"Nay," says she, "not till my husband sees you."

"Nay," sche seyd, "so mut y the,
Tylle myne husbond come and se,
I schrewe hym þat yt þought."

The Lord tries to get out, but can't,

The lord arose and lokyd abowte
If he myght eny where gete owte,
But yt holpe hym ryght noght,
The wallys were so thycke w*yth*yn,
That he no where myght owte wynne
But helpe to hym were brought ;

and then threatens the wife,

And eu*er* the lord made euylle chere,
And seyd, "dame, þou schalt by thys dere."
Sche seyd that sche ne rought ;

but she doesn't care for that,

Sche seyd "I recke nere
Whyle I am here and þou art there,
I schrewe herre þat þe doth drede."
The lord was sone owte of her þought,

[1] MS. *gar*

The wyfe went in to her lofte, — and goes away to her work.
Sche satte and dyd here dede.
Than yt felle on þat oþer daye — Next day the Lord begs for food.
Of mete and drynke he gan her pray,
There of he hadde gret nede.
He seyd, "dame, for seynt charyte, — [Fol. 181.]
Wyth some mete þou comfort me."
Sche seyd, "nay, so god me spede, — "You'll get none from me
For I swere by swete seynt Iohne,
Mete ne drynke ne getyst þou none
Butt þou wylt swete or swynke; — unless you sweat for it," says she; "spin me some flax."
For I haue both hempe and lyne,
And a betyngstocke fulle fyne,
And a swyngylle good and grete;
If þou wylt worke, tell me sone."
"Dame, bryng yt forthe, yt schalle be done, — He says he will:
Fulle gladly would I ete."
Sche toke the stocke in her honde, — she throws him the tools,
And in to the pytt sche yt sclang
Wyth a grete hete:
Sche brought the lyne and hempe on her backe, — the flax and hemp,
"Syr lord," sche seyd, "haue þou þat, — and says, "Work away."
And lerne for to swete."
Ther sche toke hym a bonde
For to occupy hys honde,
And bade hym fast on to bete.
He leyd yt downe on the stone, — He does,
And leyd on strockes welle good wone, — lays on well,
And sparyd nott on to leyne.
Whan þat he hadde wrought a thraue,
Mete and drynke he gan to craue, — and then asks for his food,
And would haue hadde yt fayne;
"That I hadde somewhat for to ete
Now after my gret swete;
Me thynketh yt were ryght, — for he's toiled night and day.
For I haue labouryd nyght and daye

The for to plese, dame, I saye,
And therto putt my myght."
The wyfe seyd "so mutt I haue hele,
And yf þi worke be wrought wele
Thou schalt haue to dyne."
Mete and drynke sche hym bare,
Wyth a thrafe of flex mare
Of fulle long boundyn lyne.
So feyre the wyfe the lord gan praye
That he schuld be werkyng aye,
And nought þat he schuld blynne ;
The lord was fayne to werke tho,
Butt hys men knewe nott of hys woo
Nor of þer lordes pyne.

The wife gives him meat and drink

[Fol. 181. b.]

and more flax,

and keeps him up to his work.

The stuard to þe wryght gan saye,
"Sawe þou owte of my lord to-daye,
Whether that he ys wende ?"
The wryght answerde and seyd "naye ;
I sawe hym nott syth yesterdaye ;
I trowe þat he be schent."
The stuard stode þe wryght by,
And of hys garlond hadde ferly
What þat yt be-mente.
The stuard seyd, "so god me saue,
Of thy garlond wondyr I haue,
And who yt hath the sent."
"Syr," he seyd, "be the same hatte
I can knowe yf my wyfe be badde
To me by eny other man ;
If my floures ouþer fade or falle,
Then doth my wyfe me wrong wyth-alle,
As many a woman can."
The stuard þought "by godes myght,
That schalle I preue thys same nyght
Whether þou blys or banne,"

The steward asks the wright after his Lord,

then notices the garland,

and asks who gave it him.

"Sir, it will tell me whether my wife goes bad."

"I'll prove that this very night," says the steward,]

And in to hys chambyr he gan gone,
And toke tresure fulle good wone, — gets plenty of money, and
276 And forth he spedde hem than. — goes off
Butt he ne stynt att no stone
Tylle he vn-to þe wryghtes hows come — to the wright's house,
279 That ylke same nyght.
He mett the wyfe amydde the gate,
Abowte þe necke he gan her take, — takes her round the neck,
282 And seyd "my dere wyght, — and offers her all
Alle the good þat ys myne — [Fol. 182.]
I wylle the geue to be thyne
285 To lye by the alle nyght." — he has to lie by her that night.
Sche seyd, "syr, lett be thy fare, — She refuses,
My husbond wolle wete wyth-owtyn mare
288 And I hym dyd that vnryght;
I would nott he myght yt wete
For alle the good that I myght gete,
291 So Ihesus[1] mutt me spede;
For, and eny man lay me by, — as her husband
My husbond would yt wete truly, — would be sure to know of it.
294 It ys wythowtyn eny drede."
The stuard seyd "for hym þat ys wrought, — The steward
There-of, dame, drede the noght — urges her again,
297 Wyth me to do that dede;
Haue here of me xx marke — and offers her 20
Of gold and syluer styf and starke, — marks.
300 Thys tresoure schalle be thy mede."
"Syr, and I graunt þat to you, — She says, "Then
Lett no man wete butt we two nowe." — don't tell any one,"
303 He seyd, "nay, wythowtyn drede."
The stuard þought, 'sykerly
Women beth both queynte & slye.'
306 The mony he gan her bede; — takes his money,
He þought wele to haue be spedde,
And of his erand he was onredde

[1] MS. *Ihc*

Or he were fro hem I-gone.
sends him up the quaint stairs,
Vp the sterys sche hym leyde
Tylle he saw the wryghtes bedde :
Of tresoure rought he none ;
He went and stumblyd att a stone,
and lets him tumble through the trap-door.
In to þe sellere he fylle sone
Downe to the bare flore.
"What the devil are you?" says the Lord.
The lord seyd "what deuylle art þou?
And þou hadest falle on me nowe,
Thowe hadest hurt me fulle sore."
[Fol. 182. b.]
The stuard stert and staryd abowte
The steward finds he can't get out;
If he myght ower gete owte
Att hole lesse or mare.
The lord seyd, "welcome, and sytt be tyme,
For þou schalt helpe to dyght thys lyne
For alle thy fers fare."
The stuard lokyd on the knyght,
and wonders why his Lord is there.
He seyd, "syr, for godes myght,
My lord, what do you here?"
He seyd "felowe, wyth-owtyn oth,
"We both came on one errand, man."
For o erand we come bothe,
The sothe wolle I nott lete."
The wife asks what they're doing;
Tho cam the wyfe them vn-to,
And seyd, "syres, what do you to,
Wylle ye nott lerne to swete?"
the Lord says,
Than seyd þe lord her vn-to,
"Your flax is done, and I want my dinner."
"Dame, youre lyne ys I-doo,
Nowe would I fayne ete :
And I haue made yt alle I-lyke,
Fulle clere, and no þing thycke,
Me thynketh yt gret payne."
The steward says if he ever gets out he'll crack her skull.
The stuard seyd "wyth-owtyn dowte,
And euer I may wynne owte,
I wyll breke her brayne."
But the wife chaffs him,
"Felowe, lett be, and sey nott so,
For þou schalt worke or euer þou goo,

Thy wordes þou torne agayne, — says he'll soon be glad to eat his words,
Fayne þou schalt be so to doo,
And thy good wylle put þerto;
As a man buxome and bayne
Thowe schalt rubbe, rele, and spynne, — and unless he rubs and reels, he'll get no meat.
And þou wolt eny mete wynne,
That I geue to god a gyfte."
The stuard seyd, "then haue I wondyr; — "I'll die for hunger first, unhouseled," answers he.
Rather would I dy for hungyr
Wyth-owte hosylle or shryfte."
The lord seyd, "so haue I hele,
Thowe wylt worke, yf þou hungyr welle, — [Fol. 183.]
What worke þat the be brought."
The lord satt and dyd hys werke, — The Lord works away,
The stuard drewe in to the derke,
Gret sorowe was in hys þought.
The lord seyd, "dame, here ys youre lyne,
Haue yt in godes blessyng and myne,
I hold yt welle I-wrought." — and gets his food and drink.
Mete and drynke sche gaue hym yn,
"The stuard," sche seyd, "wolle he nott spynne,
Wylle he do ryght noght?"
The lord seyd, "by swete sen Ione,
Of thys mete schalle he haue none — None of it will he give to the steward,
That ye haue me hydder brought." — but eats it all up,
The lord ete and dranke fast,
The stuard hungeryd att þe last,
For he gaue hym nought.
The stuard satt alle in a stody,
Hys lord hadde forgote curtesy:
Tho[1] seyd þe stuard, "geue me some." — [1 MS. The]
The lord seyd, "sorow haue þe morselle or sope
That schalle come in thy throte; — and won't give him one crumb:
Nott so much as a crome!
Butt þou wylt helpe to dyght þis lyne, — let him work and earn some for himself.
Much hungyr yt schalle be thyne

Though þou make much mone."
Vp he rose, and went therto,
The steward gives in, "Better ys me þus to doo
Whyle yt must nedys be do."
The stuard began fast to knocke,
asks for work; the wife throws it him, The wyfe þrew hym a swyngelyng stocke,
Hys mete þerwyth to wyn;
Sche brought a swyngylle at þe last,
"Good syres," sche seyd, "swyngylle on fast;
For no þing that ye blynne."
Sche gaue hym a stocke to sytt vppon,
And seyd "syres, þis werke must nedys be done,
Alle that that ys here yn."
[Fol. 183. b.] The stuard toke vp a stycke to saye,
and steward and Lord are both spinning away "Sey, seye, swyngylle better yf ye may,
Hytt wylle be the better to spynne."
Were þe lord neuer so gret,
to earn their dinner, Yet was he fayne to werke for hys mete
Though he were neuer so sadde;
Butt þe stuard þat was so stowde,
Was fayne to swyngelle þe scales owte,
Ther-of he was nott glad.
while the Lord's people cannot make out what has become of him. The lordys meyne þat were att home
Wyst nott where he was bycome,
They were fulle sore adrad.

Then the Proctor sees the wright The proctoure of þe parysche chyrche ryght
Came and lokyd on þe wryght,
He lokyd as he were madde;
Fast þe proctoure gan hym frayne,
and asks where he got his garland from. "Where hadest þou þis garlond gayne?
It ys euer lyke newe."
The wryght gan say "felowe,
"With my wife; Wyth my wyfe, yf þou wylt knowe;
and while she is true it will That dare me nott rewe;
For alle the whyle my wyfe trew ys,

My garlond wolle hold hewe I-wys, never fade,
And neu*er* falle nor fade;
And yf my wyfe take a p*ar*amoure, but if she's false it will."
Than wolle my garlond vade þe floure,
That dare I ley myne hede."
The proctoure þought, "in good faye The proctor thinks he'll test this,
That schall*e* I wete thys same daye
Whether yt may so be."
To the wryghtes hows he went, goes to the wright's wife
He grete þe wyfe wyth feyre entente,
Sche seyd "syr, welcome be ye."
"A! dame, my loue ys on you fast and declares his love for her;
Syth the tyme I sawe you last;
I pray you yt may so be
That ye would graunt me of youre grace
To play w*yth* you in some p*ri*uy place, he must have her or die.
Or ellys to deth mutt me." [Fol. 184.]
Fast þe proctoure gan to pray,
And eu*er* to hym sche seyd "naye, She says nay,
That wolle I nott doo.
Hadest þou done þat dede w*yth* me, as her husband will know of it by his garland.
My spouse by hys garlond myght see,
That schuld torne me to woe."
The proctoure seyd, "by heuen kyng, The proctor
If he sey to the any þing
He schall*e* haue sorowe vnsowte; offers her 20 marks.
Twenty marke I wolle þe geue,
It wolle þe helpe welle to lyue,
The mony here haue I brought."
Nowe hath sche the tresure tane, These she takes;
And vp þe steyre be they gane, they go upstairs,
(What helpyth yt to lye?)
The wyfe went the steyre be-syde,
The proctoure went a lytyll*e* to wyde and the proctor tumbles into the cellar,
He fell*e* downe by and by.
Whan he in to þe seller felle,

and thinks he is going to hell.

He wente to haue sonke in to helle,
He was in hart fulle sory.
The stuard lokyd on the knyght,
And seyd "proctoure, for godes myght,

The steward asks him to sit down;

Come and sytt vs by."
The proctoure began to stare,
For he was he wyst neuer whare,

he doesn't know where he is,

Butt wele he knewe þe knyght
And the stuard þat swyngelyd þe lyne.

but asks what the Lord and steward are after there,

He seyd "syres, for godes pyne,
What do ye here thys nyght?"
The stuard seyd, "god geue the care,
Thowe camyst to loke howe we fare,
Nowe helpe þis lyne were dyght."
He stode stylle in a gret þought,
What to answer he wyst noght:
"By mary fulle of myght,"

working the wife's flax;

The proctoure seyd, "what do ye in þis yn
For to bete thys wyfes lyne?

[Fol. 184. b.]

For Jhesus loue, fulle of myght,"

he, the proctor, will never do the like,

The proctoure seyd ryght as he þought,
"For me yt schalle be euylle wrought
And I may see aryght,

it's not his trade.

For I lernyd neuer in londe
For to haue a swyngelle in hond
By day nor be nyght."

The steward says, "We're as good as you, and yet

The stuard seyd, "as good as þou
We hold vs that be here now,
And lett preue yt be syght;

have to work for our food."

Yet must vs worke for owre mete,
Or ellys schalle we none gete,
Mete nor drynke to owre honde."

The Lord says "And you'll have to work ere you go."

The lord seyd, "why flyte ye two?
I trowe ye wylle werke or ye goo
Yf yt be as I vndyrstond."
Abowte he goys twyes or thryes;

They ete & drynke in such wyse
That þey geue hym ryght noght.
The proctoure seyd, "thynke ye no schame,
Yheue me some mete, (ye be to blame,)
Of that the wyfe ye brought."
The stuard seyd "euylle spede the soppe
If eny morcelle come in thy throte
Butt þou w*yth* vs hadest wrought."
The proctoure stode in a stody
Whether he myght worke hem by;
And so to torne hys þought,
To the lord he drewe nere,
And to hym seyd w*yth* myld chere,
"That mary mott the spede."
The proctoure began to knocke,
The good wyfe rawte hym a rocke,
For therto hadde sche nede;
Sche seyd "whan I was mayde att home,
Other werke cowde I do none
My lyfe ther-wyth to lede."
Sche gaue hym in hande a rocke hynde,
And bade hem fast for to wynde
Or ellys to lett be hys dede.
"Yes, dame," he seyd, "so haue I hele,
I schalle yt worke both feyre & welle
As ye haue taute me."
He wauyd vp a strycke of lyne,
And he span wele and fyne
By-fore the swyngelle tre.
The lord seyd "þou spynnest to grete,
Therfor þou schalt haue no mete,
That þou schalt welle see."
Thus þey satt and wrought fast
Tylle þe weke dayes were past;
Then the wryght, home came he,
And as he cam by hys hows syde

They eat and drink, and give the proctor nothing,

to his great disgust,

till at last

he too knocks for work,

gets a distaff and some winding to do,

[Fol. 185.]

and spins away well.

Thus they all sit and work till the wright comes home.

As he approaches

he hears a noise,

He herd noyse that was not ryde
Of *per*sons two or thre ;
One of hem knockyd lyne,
A-nothyr swyngelyd good and fyne
By-fore the swyngylle tre,
The thyrde did rele and spynne,
Mete and drynke ther-wyth to wynne,
Gret nede ther-of hadde he.
Thus þe wryght stode herkenyng ;

his wife comes to meet him,

Hys wyfe was ware of hys comyng,
And ageynst hym went sche.
" Dame," he seyd, " what ys þis dynne ?

and he asks what all that noise is about.

I here gret noyse here wythynne ;
Telle me, so god the spede."

" Why, three workmen have come to help us, dear.

" Syr," sche seyd, " workemen thre
Be come to helpe you and me,
Ther-of we haue gret nede ;

Who are they ? "

Fayne would I wete what they were."

The wright sees his Lord in the pit,

But when he sawe hys lord there,
Hys hert bygan to drede
To see hys lord in þat place,

and asks how

He þought yt was a strange cas,
And seyd, " so god hym spede,

[Fol. 185. b.]

What do ye here, my lord and knyght ?
Telle me nowe for godes myght

he came there.

Howe cam thys vn-to ? "

The Lord asks mercy : he is very sorry.

The knyght seyd " What ys best rede ?
Mercy I aske for my mysdede,
My hert ys wondyr wo."

" So am I," says the wright, " to see you among the flax and hemp,"

" So ys myne, veramen*t*,
To se you among thys flex and hempe,
Fulle sore yt ruyth me ;
To se you in such hevynes,
Fulle sore myne hert yt doth oppresse,

and orders his wife to let the Lord out.

By god in trinite."
The wryght bade hys wyfe lett hym owte,

"Nay, þen sorowe come on my snowte
If they passe hens to-daye
Tylle that my lady come and see
Howe þey would haue done wyth me,
Butt nowe late me saye."
Anon sche sent after the lady bryght
For to fett home her lord and knyght,
Therto sche seyd noght;
Sche told her what they hadde ment,
And of ther purpos & ther intente
That they would haue wrought.
Glad was þat lady of that tydyng;
When sche wyst her lord was lyuyng,
Ther-of sche was fulle fayne:
Whan sche came vn-to þe steyre abouen,
Sche lokyd vn-to þe seller downe,
And seyd,—þis ys nott to leyne,—
"Good syres, what doo you here?"
"Dame, we by owre mete-fulle dere,
Wyth gret trauayle and peyne;
I pray you helpe þat we were owte,
And I wylle swere wythowtyn dowte
Neuer to come here agayne."
The lady spake the wyfe vn-tylle,
And seyd "dame, yf yt be youre wylle,
What doo thes meyny here?"
The carpentarys wyfe her answerd sykerly,
"Alle they would haue leyne me by,
Euerych in ther manere,
Gold and syluer they me brought,
And forsoke yt, and would yt noght,
The ryche gyftes so clere.
Wyllyng þey were to do me schame,
I toke ther gyftes wyth-owtyn blame,
And ther they be alle thre."
The lady answerd her anon,

"No, bother my snout if I do," says the wife, "before his lady sees what he wanted to do with me.'

So she sends for the dame to fetch her lord home,

and tells her what he and his companions came there for.

The lady

looks down into the cellar,

and says, "Good sirs, what are you doing?"

"Earning our meat full dear:

help us out, and I'll never come here again."

The lady asks the wife why

[Fol. 186.]

the men are there.

The wife says they wanted to lie with her, and offered her gold and silver;

she took their gifts, and there they are.

The lady says

she really wants her lord for herself,

"I haue thynges to do att home
Mo than two or thre;
I wyst my lord neuer do ryght noght
Of no þing þat schuld be wrought,
Such as fallyth to me."

and laughs heartily when the three culprits come out.

The lady lawghed and made good game
Whan they came owte alle in-same
From the swyngylle tre.

The Lord says,

The knyght seyd "felowys in fere,
I am glad þat we be here,
By godes dere pyte;
Dame, and ye hadde bene wyth vs,

"Ah, you'd have worked too if you'd been with us,

Ye would haue wrought, by swete Ihesus,
As welle as dyd we."
And when they cam vp abouen
They turnyd abowte and lokyd downe,
The lord seyd, "so god saue me,

I never had such a turn in my life before, I can tell you."

Yet hadde I neuer such a fytte
As I haue hadde in þat lowe pytte;
So mary so mutt me spede."

Then the Lord and lady go home,

The knyght and thys lady bryght,
Howe they would home that nyght,
For no thyng they would abyde;

as ADAM of COBSAM says.

And so they went home;
Thys seyd Adam of Cobsam.*

[Fol. 186. b.]

On their way home

By the weye as they rode
Throwe a wode in ther playeng,
For to here the fowlys syng

they halt,

They hovyd stylle and bode.

and the steward and proctor swear they'll never go back for five and forty years.

The stuard sware by godes ore,
And so dyd the proctoure much more,
That neuer in ther lyfe
Would they no more come in þat wonne
Whan they were onys thens come,

* The letter between the *b* and *a* has had the lower part marked over. But it is more like a long *f* than anything else.

Thys forty yere and fyve.
Of the tresure that they brought
The lady would geue hem ryght noght,
Butt gaue yt to the wryghtes wyfe.
Thus the wryghtes garlond was feyre of hewe,
And hys wyfe bothe good and trewe :
There-of was he fulle blythe ;
I take wytnes att gret and smalle,
Thus trewe bene good women alle
That nowe bene on lyve,
So come thryste on ther hedys
Whan they mombylle on ther bedys
Ther pat*er* n*oste*r ryue.

The lady gives all their money to the wright's wife.

The garland is fresh as ever.

Thus true are all good women now alive !

Here ys wretyn a geste of the wryght
That hadde a garlond welle I-dyght,
The coloure wylle neu*er* fade.
Now god þat ys heuyn kyng
Graunt vs alle hys dere blessyng
Owre hertes for to glade ;
And alle tho that doo her husbondys ryght,
Pray we to Ih*es*u fulle of myght,
That feyre mott hem byfalle,
And that they may come to heuen blys,
For thy dere moderys loue ther-of nott to mys,
Alle good wyues alle.
Now alle tho that thys tretys hath hard,
Ih*es*u graunt hem for her reward
As trew louers to be
As was the wryght vn-to hys wyfe
And sche to hym duryng her lyfe.
Amen, for charyte.

Here then is written a tale of the Wright and his Garland.

God grant us all his blessing,

and may all true faithful wives

come to heaven's bliss,

and be such

true lovers as the

[Fol. 187.]

wright and his wife were.
Amen !

Here endyth the wryghtes p*ro*cesse trewe
Wyth hys garlond feyre of hewe
That neu*er* dyd fade the coloure.

Here ends our tale of the Garland

It was made by the avyse
Of hys wywes moder wytty and wyse
Of flourys most of honoure,
Of roses whyte þat wylle nott fade,
Whych floure alle ynglond doth glade
Wyth trewloues medelyd in syght;
Vn-to the whych floure I-wys
The loue of god and of the comenys
Subdued * bene of ryght.

which was made of White Roses,

the flowers that gladden all England,

and receive the love of God, and of the Commons too.

EXPLICIT.

* May be *subdied;* the word has been corrected.

NOTE.

The two first of the three operations of flax-dressing described in lines 526 – 529, p. 16,

> One of hem knockyd lyne,
> Anothyr swyngelyd good and fyne
> By-fore the swyngylle-tre ;
> The thyrde did rele and spynne,

must correspond to the preliminary breaking of the plant, and then the scutching or beating to separate the coarse tow or hards from the tare or fine hemp. Except so far as the *swingle* served as a heckle, the further *heckling* of the flax, to render the fibre finer and cleaner, was dispensed with, though heckles (iron combs) must have been in use when the poem was written—inasmuch as *hekele*, *hekelare*, *hekelyn*, and *hekelynge*, are in the Promptorium, ab. 1440 A.D. Under *Hatchell*, Randle Holme gives a drawing of a heckle.

The final *e* after words in *ll* represents the line through the *ll*'s. The lines through the *h*'s in the MS. are not, I believe, marks of contraction. There are no insettings of the third lines, or spaces on changes of subject, in the MS.

For reference to two analogous stories to that of the Poem, I am indebted to Mr Thomas Wright. The first is that of *Constant Duhamel* in the third volume of Barbazan, and the second that of the Prioress and her three Suitors in the Minor Poems of Dan John Lydgate, published by the Percy Society, ed. Halliwell.

In the Barbazan tale "the wife is violently solicited by three suitors, the priest, the provost, and the forester, who on her refusal persecute her husband. To stop their attacks she gives them appointments at her house immediately after one another, so that when one is there and stripped for the bath, another comes, and, pretending it is her husband, she conceals them one after another in a large tub full of feathers, out of which they can see all that is going on in the room. She then sends successively for their three wives to come and bathe with her, the bath being still in the same room, and as each is stripped naked in the bath, she introduces her own husband, who dishonours them one after another, one *à l'envere*, with rather aggravating circumstances, and all in view of their three husbands; and finally the latter are turned out of the house naked, or rather well feathered, then hunted by the whole town and their dogs, well bitten and beaten."

(If any one wants to see a justification of the former half of the proverb quoted by Roberd of Brunne,

> Frenche men synne yn lecherye
> And Englys men yn enuye,

let him read the astounding revelation made of the state of the early French mind by the tales in the 3rd and 4th vols. of Barbazan's Fabliaux, ed. 1808.)

The second story, told by Lydgate, is as follows :—A prioress is wooed by "a young knyght, a parson of a paryche, and a burges of a borrow." She promises herself to the first if he will lie for a night in a chapel sewn up in a sheet like a corpse ; to the second, if he will perform the funeral service over the knight, and bury him ; to the third, if he will dress up like a devil, and frighten both parson and knight. This the burges Sir John does well, but is himself terrified at the corpse getting up : all three run away from one another : the knight falls on a stake, and into a snare set for bucks, and breaks his fore top in falling from the tree ; the merchant gets tossed by a bull ; the parson breaks his head and jumps into a bramble bush ; and the prioress gets rid of them all, but not before she has made the "burges" or "marchaunt" pay her twenty marks not to tell his wife and the country generally of his tricks.—*Minor Poems*, p. 107—117, ed. 1840.

GLOSSARY.

And, 89, 292, if.
Bayne, 348, ready.
Blynne, 4, cease, stop; AS. *blinnan*.
Blyue, 44, 110, 118, speedily.
Bonde, 226, a bund-le; Du. *bondt*, a bavin, a bush of thornes.
Brayne, 342, scull.
Brydalle, 71, AS. *brýd-ál*, bride ale, marriage feast.
By, 197, buy.
Chaste, 176, chest, box, pit.
Dowte, 14, fear.
Dyght, 323, 379, prepare, dress.
Fare, 148, 324, going on, wish, project.
Fere, 604, company.
Flyte, 484, wrangle, quarrel; AS. *flít*, strife, wrangling.
Forthynketh, 51, repents, makes sorry; AS. *forþencan*, to despair.
Frayne, 409, ask; AS. *fregnan*, Goth. *fraihnan*.
Gan, 22, did.
Geue to God a gyfte, 351, I make a vow, I promise you, I'll take my oath.
Hele, 140, salvation.
Hovyd, 624, halted, stopt.
Hynde, 508 ?
I-doo, 335, done, finished.
I-dyght, 644, prepared.
In-same, 602, together.
Layne, 68, hide, conceal.
Lende, 107, stay; ? AS. *landian*, to land, or *lengian* to prolong.
Leyne, 231, lay, beat.
Lyne, 214, AS. *lín*, flax; ? rope, 246.
Meyne, 403, household.
Myster, 12, trade; Fr. *mestier*.
O, 329, one.
Onredde, 308; AS. *unrét*, *unrót*, uncheerful, sorrowful, or *unræd*, imprudent.
Oþre, 205, second.
Putry, 61, adultery; O.Fr. *puterie*, whoring.
Rawte, 503, reached, gave.
Rewe, 186, have pity.
Rocke, Du. *een Rocke*, *Spinrock*, A Distaffe, or a Spinrock; *Rocken*, To Winde Flaxe or Wool upon a Rock (Hexham). Dan. *rok*, O.N. *rokkr*, G. *rocken*: "a distaff held in the hand from which the thread was spun by twirling a ball below. 'What, shall a woman with a *rokke* drive thee away?'" Digby Mysteries, p. 11 (Halliwell.) "An Instrument us'd in some Parts for the spinning of Flax and Hemp." Phillips; for reeling and spinning (l. 529).

Rought, 198, 312, AS. *róhte*, p. of *récan*, to reck, care for.

Ryde, 524, light, small, AS. *geryd*, levis, æquus. Lye.

Ryue, 642, Du. *rijf*, rife, or abundant.

Scales, 401 ? husks, bark, or rind, see *shoves*, col. 2, l. 1.

Schent, 258, destroyed ; AS. *scendan*.

Stounde, 4, short time.

Strycke, 514, "*Strike of Flax*, is as much as is heckled at one Handful." Phillips.

Swyngylle, 216, "Swingle-Staff, a Stick to beat Flax with," Phil. ; AS. *swingele*, a whip, lash. "To *swingle*, to beat ; a Term among Flax-dressers." Phillips. Though Randle Holme, Bk. III., ch. viii. No. xxxiii., gives the *Swingle-Tree* of a Coach-Pole, (these are made of wood, and are fastened by Iron hooks, stables *(sic)* chains and pinns to the Coach-pole, to the which Horses are fastened by their Harnish when there is more then two to draw the Coach), yet at Chap. vi., § iv., p. 285, col. 1, he says, "He beareth Sable, a *Swingle* Hand erected, Surmounting of a *Swingle* Foot, Or. This is a Wooden Instrument made like a Fauchion, with an hole cut in the top of it, to hold it by : It is used for the clearing of Hemp and Flax from the large broken Stalks or Shoves, by the help of the said *Swingle* Foot, which it is hung upon, which said Stalks being first broken, bruised, and cut into shivers by a Brake.

S. 3, such erected in Fesse O. born by *Flaxlowe*.

S. 3, such in Pale A., born by *Swingler*."

(A drawing is given by Holme, No. 4, on the plate opposite p. 285.)

"*Swingowing* is the beating off the bruised inward stalk of the Hemp or Flax, from the outward pill, which as *(sic)* the Hemp or Flax, p. 106, col. 2.

Spinning is to twist the Flax hairs into Yarn or Thrid. *Reeling* is to wind the Yarn of the Wheel Spool on a Reel," p. 107, Col. 2.

Take, 161, deliver.

The, 187, thrive.

Tolle, 62, take.

Tre, 105, wood, timber.

Trewloves, 669, either figures like true-lovers' knots, or the imitations of the herb or flower *Truelove*, which is given by Coles as *Herb Paris*, (a quatrefoil whose leaves bear a sort of likeness to a true-lovers' knot) and in Halliwell as *one-berry ;* but I cannot find that Edward IV. had any such plants on his arms or badge. Knots were often worn as badges, see Edmonston's Heraldry,

Appendix, Knots. On the other hand, Willement (Regal Heraldry) notices that the angels attending Richard II. in the picture at Wilton, had collars worked with white roses and broom-buds; and true-loves, if a plant be meant by it, may have been Edward's substitute for the broom *(planta genista)*. The Trewloves bear, one, Ar. on a chev. sa., three cinquefoils, or; the other, Ar. on a chev. sa., a quatrefoil of the field.

Vade, 125, 419, fade; Du. *vadden* (Hexham).

Wone, 275, store, quantity.

Wonne, 90, 628, dwelling.

Woode, 153, wild, mad.

Yheue, 491, give.

Yougeth, 20, youth, bachelor's freedom.

WOMEN.

Women, women, loue of women,
make bare purs *with* some men.

Some be nyse as a nonne hene,*
ȝit al thei be nat soo.
some be lewde, some all be schreude
Go schrewes wher thei goo.

Sum be nyse, and some be fonde,
And some be tame, y vndirstonde,
And some cane take brede of a manes hande,†
Yit all thei be nat soo.

Some cane part withouten hire, [Fol. 135 b.]
And some make bate in eueri chire,
And some cheke mate with oure Sire,
Yit all they be nat so.
Some be lewde and sume be schreuede,
go wher they goo.

Som be browne, and some be whit,
And some be tender as a ttripe,
And some of theym be chiry ripe,
Yit all thei be not soo.
Sume be lewde and some be schrewede,
go wher they goo.

Some of them be treue of love
Beneth þe gerdelle but nat above,
And in a hode aboue cane chove,

* *Hene* for *hende*, gentle, I suppose.
† For *honde*. The lines are arranged as in the MS.

Yit all thei do nat soo.
Some be lewde and some be schreude,
go where they goo.

Some cane whister, & some cane crie,
Some cane flater, and some cane lye,
And some cane sette þe moke awrie
Yit all thei do nat soo.
Sume be lewde and sume be schreuede,
go where thei goo.

He that made this songe full good,
Came of þe north and of þe sothern blode,
And some what kyne to Robyn Hode,
Yit all we be nat soo.
Some be lewde and some be schrewede,
go where they goo.

Some be lewde, some be [s]chrwde,
Go where they goo.

EXPLICIT.

P.S.—This Poem was printed by Mr Halliwell in *Reliquiæ Antiquæ*, vol. i., p. 248, and reprinted by Mr Thomas Wright, at p. 103 of his edition of *Songs and Carols* for the Percy Society, 1847. As, besides minor differences, the reprint has *manne*, and the original *nanne*, for what I read as *nonne*, l. 3, while both have *withowte* for *with oure*, l. 13, and *accripe* for *a ttripe*, l. 18 (see Halliwell's Dictionary, "*accripe*, a herb?"), I have not cancelled this impression. The other version of the song, from Mr Wright's MS. in his text, pp. 89—91, differs a good deal from that given above.

JOHN CHILDS AND SON, PRINTERS.

224342

$5.50 224342

Author Adam, of Cobsam.

Title The Wright's chaste wife or "A fable of a wryght that was maryde to a pore wydows dowtre...ed. by F.J.Furnivall London,pub. for the E.E.T.S.

Adam

Boston College Library
Chestnut Hill 67, Mass.

Books may be kept for two weeks unless a shorter time is specified.

Two cents a day is charged for each 2-week book kept overtime; 25 cents a day for each overnight book.

If you cannot find what you want, inquire at the delivery desk for assistance.

6-49